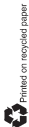


**State Representative**  
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# 2010 Session Brief

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## STATE REPRESENTATIVE **Timm Ormsby**

**3<sup>rd</sup> District – Spokane**

# 2010 Session Brief

Winter 2010

Dear Friends and Neighbors –

I wish I could start out this newsletter the way I've started some others in previous years: by telling you what a great budget the Legislature had produced, and how jobs were on the upswing and public services were healthy.

Those days will return, without question. But for now, Washington is suffering through the same worldwide economic recession that has affected every industrial nation on the planet. We're better off here than some states, of course. Despite what you may have read or heard, Washington's spending during the last several years hasn't been extravagant. We have tried, as a state, to invest in necessities first.

That's good, but it has a very serious downside. Because there wasn't much "fat" in the state government, last year's \$4.5 billion in cuts carved right into the muscle. And this year, with an additional \$2.6 billion budget hole to fill, we're dangerously close to the bone.

Ordinarily at this time of year, I would be sending you a session preview, full of plans and ideas to solve some of Spokane's and Washington's thorniest problems. This time around, I'm sending this simply to remind you that I'm here working on behalf of the people of our city and our state, and to highlight a few of my priorities. I should say right here that I believe the budget is a moral document and not just ink on paper. Win or lose, I will fight to see that we continue to provide essential services to people who are genuinely challenged in this economy. We can't simply abandon one another; everyone has lines they won't cross, and that's one of mine.

No one here has all the answers. You might, so I hope you'll keep in touch as the session heads for its March 11 conclusion.

Thank you for trusting me with this job. It's tough at times, but I'm honored to work for you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Timm Ormsby".

Timm Ormsby





# Rep. Timm Ormsby • 3<sup>rd</sup> District • 2010 Session Brief

## Committees:

- Agriculture & Natural Resources (*Vice Chair*)
- Capital Budget (*Vice Chair*)
- State Government & Tribal Affairs

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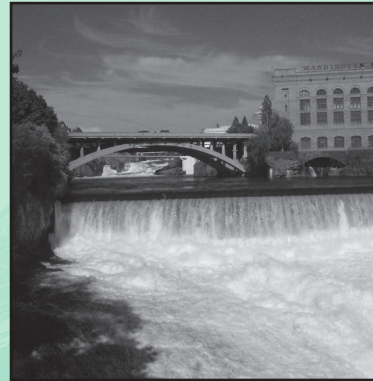
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*With the state looking at closing a \$2.6 billion budget hole, it's clear that no one is going to get very far this year with plans that involve increased spending at the state level. Instead, much of my time and energy will be spent trying to preserve the vital public services that bore the brunt of so many cuts last session. However, I can point to a few areas where I know I'll be working in the coming weeks.*

## Modernizing our antiquated water policy



At the risk of oversimplifying one of the most complicated public policy issues, we have two water problems to deal with: quality and quantity. As the vice chair of the Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee and a point person in this area, I'll continue trying to improve the way Washington deals with what may be its most precious and limited resource. Fish need water. Farms need water. Families need water. And Washington's tribes have ironclad treaty rights to water. Our task is to devise a fair and reasonable method to determine how we allocate the water we have at any given moment. It's a big issue, a sensitive issue, and we'll take it one step at a time. But we have to take steps now, before a thorny problem becomes a life-and-death crisis.

## How do you define renewable energy?



This is a question the Legislature wrestled with last year, and the wrestling continues. It's not just a question of words; millions of dollars are riding on our decision as a state. Washington state has a definition that was put into law when the voters approved Initiative 937 in 2006. The initiative requires large utilities in Washington to buy at least 15 percent of their electricity from renewable energy sources such as solar or wind power. Because our state's renewable energy definition is considerably different than the federal definition, we could be setting ourselves up for potential conflict and increased energy costs. That troubles me. I'm a committed environmentalist, and I'm also committed to helping Washington families and businesses by keeping our energy costs among the lowest in the nation. How do we strike the balance between clean renewable energy and affordable energy prices? I'd really like to hear from you on this issue.

## Making smart investments

I mentioned at the top of this page that policy ideas that involve spending new money will be long shots this year, at best. But when spending money actually saves money, we need to look at our opportunities. A good example is The Jobs Act of 2010. The first bill to pass out of the House this session, the Job Act will create an estimated 38,000 construction jobs in every corner of the state, including our corner here in Spokane. If approved at the polls next fall, The Jobs Act will invest \$850 million in bond proceeds to pay for energy-efficiency updates and renovations at schools and universities. That's a lot of money, true. But 38,000 good jobs are a lot of jobs, and the energy cost savings to taxpayers could save local taxpayers as much as \$190 million a year in lowered energy costs.

